

**Rutland County Council**

**Head of Service - response to the IRO report**

1. This report is the Head of Service for Vulnerable Children's response to the annual IRO report which has outlined a number of service recommendations as set out below:

- 1.1. The timescale for the availability of social work reports still needs to be improved.

*There has been a significant increase in workloads within team 11 during 2013/14. The looked after children numbers are 34 at the end of March 14 in contrast to 29 the previous year. There have also been increases in the numbers of children subject to a child protection plan. This has been compounded by an increase in the number of children subject of court proceedings ( 8) and the implementation of the new Public Law Outline and a requirement on social workers to manage cases through the courts in 26 weeks rather than 40+ weeks previously. Nevertheless, it is important that these timescales are met. The Head of Service for Vulnerable Children has established monthly Quality Assurance meetings with the IRO to address quality issues. The importance of meeting timescales for completion of social work reports has been highlighted to team managers and will be monitored through team plans.*

- 1.2. More foster placements are secured locally for teenagers requiring placements.

*The fostering service has a good record of recruiting and retaining foster carers. We have local foster carers who are able to meet the majority of needs of our children in care population. As a result we have been able to sell placements to neighbouring local authorities. There is however still work to do to ensure that our more complex*

*placement needs can be met. In addition, the new Youth Housing Project should also increase opportunities for teenagers.*

- 1.3. Further consideration is given to ensure there is provision to accommodate sibling groups.

*The Local Authority continues to make this a recruitment priority. However, not many carers are willing to foster more than one child.*

- 1.4. Children who no longer need to be subject to a placement order should have those orders revoked as agreed in their care plans and review meetings.

*There has been some drift on care planning contributed by workload volume issues raised above. The Head of Service for Vulnerable Children has now established a monthly meeting for all children without a clear permanence plan including children subject to sec 20 voluntary care, full care orders and those with placements orders which needs revocation. The first meeting took place in May 2014 and work has begun to review all these cases. Furthermore the new QA process outlined above between the IRO and HoS will identify and resolve issues at an earlier stage.*

- 1.5. Strategic discussions are held with CAMHS to ensure that CAMHS services meet the needs of Rutland children.

*There has been a significant amount of criticism of CAMHS services regionally and nationally. The recent Peer Challenge Team review also identified CAMHS services to Rutland children as a challenge.*

*As a result this issue has been raised at specific meetings with CAMHS as well as through the Children's Trust and Health and Well Being Board. The wider LLR partnership group is scoping a review of the CAMHS services to better meet need.*

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